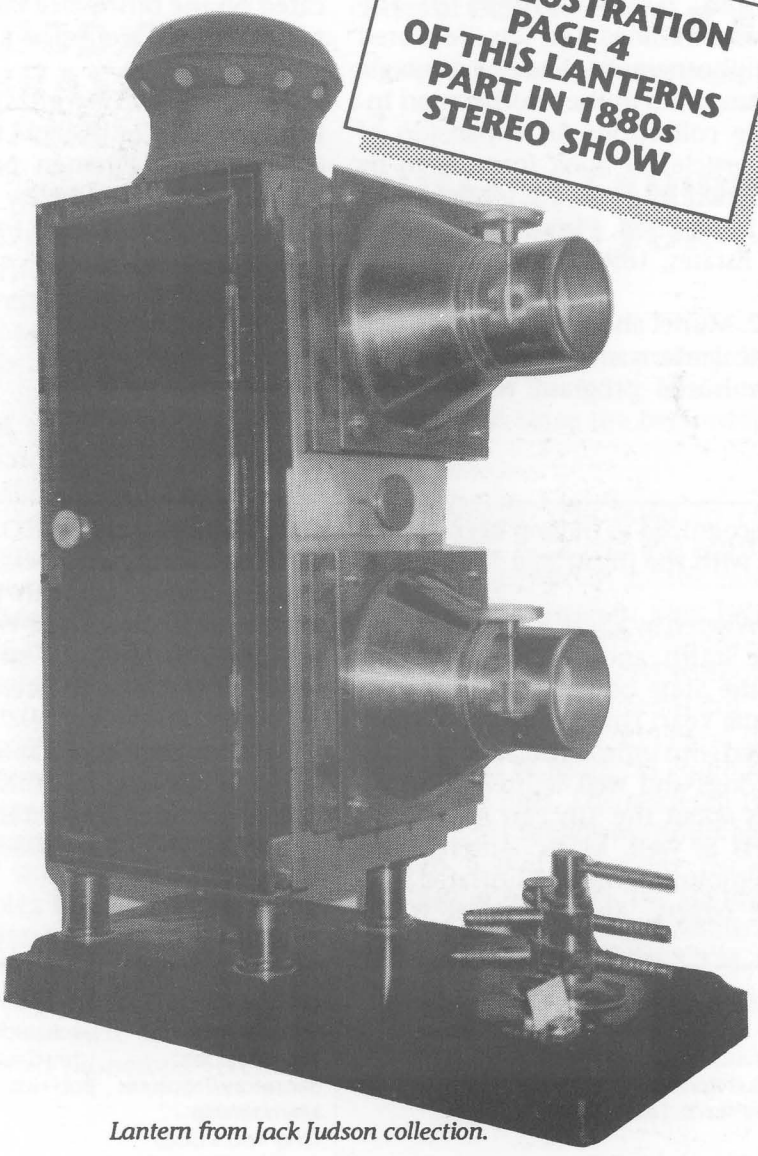
THE MAGIC LANTERN GAZETTE

Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada ©

Volume 3
Number 2

Summer
1991

SEE ILLUSTRATION PAGE 4 OF THIS LANTERNS PART IN 1880s STEREO SHOW



Lantern from Jack Judson collection.

ORIGINAL RED INK

AND WHAT OF THE 1992 CONVENTION?

Well, considering the numbers of members, I'd say the response to the last Gazette asking about intentions of possible attendees was on a scale of 1 to 10, about a 2+.! Some were very quick and positive in their response, and quite a few (operative word is few) waited til the last.

We failed to include the question, when would you be able to attend? But based on past conventions in America, and present indications, the last two weeks of June 1992 seem most appropriate, and acceptable. We are presently arranging a venue for

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INSIDE

- RADIOPTICAN STORIES
- "ALL JOIN IN THE CHORUS"
- A ONE-ARMED PAPER HANGER
- COMING ATTRACTION SLIDES

Convention 1992 cont.

group activities, such as auditorium for the lantern shows, displays will be in my own show rooms, and sale,trade, auction space will take place in the same venue as the shows,which presently have tentatively been agreed to by a local museum at no charge to the society. The ever active and willing folks in the northwest group have volunteered to help with the PR materials, and other stuff like programs and such, but some details remain for decision and action. But I do believe that a good time will be had by those who make the effort. There is even some keen sightseeing to be done here—Yes, we even have buildings standing since the 1700s. The Alamo, great eating on the lovely river walk, a number of fine art museums, and a couple of lanterns that may be of interest to those who are not too jaded. I guarantee to show some things I am sure very few of the members have seen. **It's not too late to say you will come.**

UPDATE OF BICKMORE RESEARCH

By David Tischler

Our research into the life and times of Prof. Albert S. Bickmore is presently at a halt. The museum is undergoing extensive renovations which make it very difficult for us to reach their library. Also, the assistant librarian who we were working closely with is no longer there. But, here are some items that may interest you.

1. House and Garden magazine for September, 1991 has an article entitled, Great Gardens of the Midwest's Gilded Age. It is illustrated with photographs made from magic lantern slides in the Smithsonian Institute collection. An expansion of that article, in book form, is to be published by Harry N. Abrams and will be entitled, Proud Owners, Private Estates, 1890-1940.

2. Muriel and I will be giving two magic lantern shows as part of an Elder hostel program week. (Elder hostel is an education program for folks over 60 years of age and uses 1000 institutions throughout the United States and the world.)

Time: Thursday evenings, September 26, 1991 and November 7, 1991.

Place: Watson Homestead, Painted Post, N.Y. Watson Homestead is a conference and retreat center located on the birthplace farm of Thomas J. Watson, founder of IBM.

Program: Old favorites like Pussy's Road to Ruin, Gulliver in Lilliput, and the Victorian Firemen plus photographic slides of old New York State and views of childhood in the 1920-1930 era.

SEATTLE HAD A TIN PAN ALLEY, TOO!

From: RO. Bishop, Sr.

Need one more book on your shelves? A book that touches on the edge of our magic lantern medium? A fine little book in paper back form, 8" x 12" and 70 some pages. A well illustrated volume filled with reproductions of sheet music published during the Roaring Twenties and the Dirty Thirties. Many of the songs will be recognized as having been associated with the Illustrated Song Series.

Written by a Seattle Author, Merle Irene Smith, and self-published during the State of Washington's Centennial Year. This handsome volume is filled with information about popular songs and well written short articles about the Tin Pan Alley composers as well. Magic lantern buffs will enjoy recognizing Illustrated Song Slide covers. Another tidbit is the story of Alice and Howell O. Morrison, early day song publishers who their lifelong love affair with publishing and music in Anacortes, Washington as Alice illustrated the singing song sliders at the local theater.

Although not available, so far as I know at book stores, this fine book can be obtained by contacting Merle I. Smith, P.O. Box 30834, Seattle, WA 98103

TOP

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MAGIC LANTERNS: OR WOOD GLASS AND BRASS IN THE DARK

This is the title of a one hour presentation given by Jack Judson, at the International Convention and Screening Festival of the Association for Multi-Image, held in San Antonio from August 18 to 23, 1991.

Original wood mounted moveable, mechanical or special effects slides were shown with a large wood and brass biunial lantern on a central,original Victorian, bamboo and brass framed cloth screen, while on either side exact duplicate glass Mounted 35 mm slides were shown in 4 computer programmed sequences paralleling what was being shown on the center screen in original form by hand. 10 feet tall and 30 feet wide is quite a display of lantern slides!!! This was a demonstration to illustrate the imaging of the past, in some of its more complex forms,while showing how it appeared done in a modern mode. WOW, what a job to prepare, and pull off. Fortunately, Don Sutherland was here for the week, and along with numerous "Techies" from AMI, and the encouragement of Elgin Smith who came all the way from Kansas, it came off well. Attendees were from all over Europe, Japan, Mexico, South America, and many other parts of the World.

Two glass displays, furnished by Jack, filled with lanterns slides, and illustrations, were on display during two days of the Professional trade show. A good amount of Society information was passed out during this time, including about 30 membership applications.

The lead-up publicity was terrific, thanks to the fine writing ability and efforts of Don Sutherland.

(see story A One-Armed Paper Hanger)

MUSEUM EXHIBIT EXTENDED FOR AMI

Jack Judson's lanterns have been on exhibit at the Witte Museum in San Antonio since the beginning of the year.

Originally scheduled to close months ago, Jack and the Museum have graciously extended the exhibit so that AMI attendees may have a look at the largest two-projector rig known, a "carousel" system for lantern slides long predating the Ektagraphic, and an otherwise spectacular array of beautiful equipment of various kinds. The museum is located at 3801 Broadway; hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday(until 9 p.m. on Tuesdays), Noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is $4 for adults (free from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays). For more information,call 978-8100.

The magic lantern? "In the 1990s," Jack Judson concludes, "people are so unaware that there even exists this history that they might be just as impressionable as those who saw their first lantern shows in the 1600s."

NATIONAL STEREOSCOPIC ASSOCIATION SEES ITS ROOTS

President, Jack Judson, gave an invited talk on June 21, 1991 to this National group at its annual convention in San Antonio, Texas, on the subject of what is believed to be the earliest illustration,(see page 4), of actual Stereo (3-D) projection and the French Biunial used to do it. Also on display for two days of the convention, was the exact make and model of French Biunial from the Judson Collection. Much interest was generated among the attendees, and numerous Stereo cameras clicked off pictures of the beautiful Biunial.

believed to be the earliest illustration of actual Stereo (3-D) projection

The early illustrations exhibited are from the wonderful French book, *Magic Lumineuse.* It is clear from the

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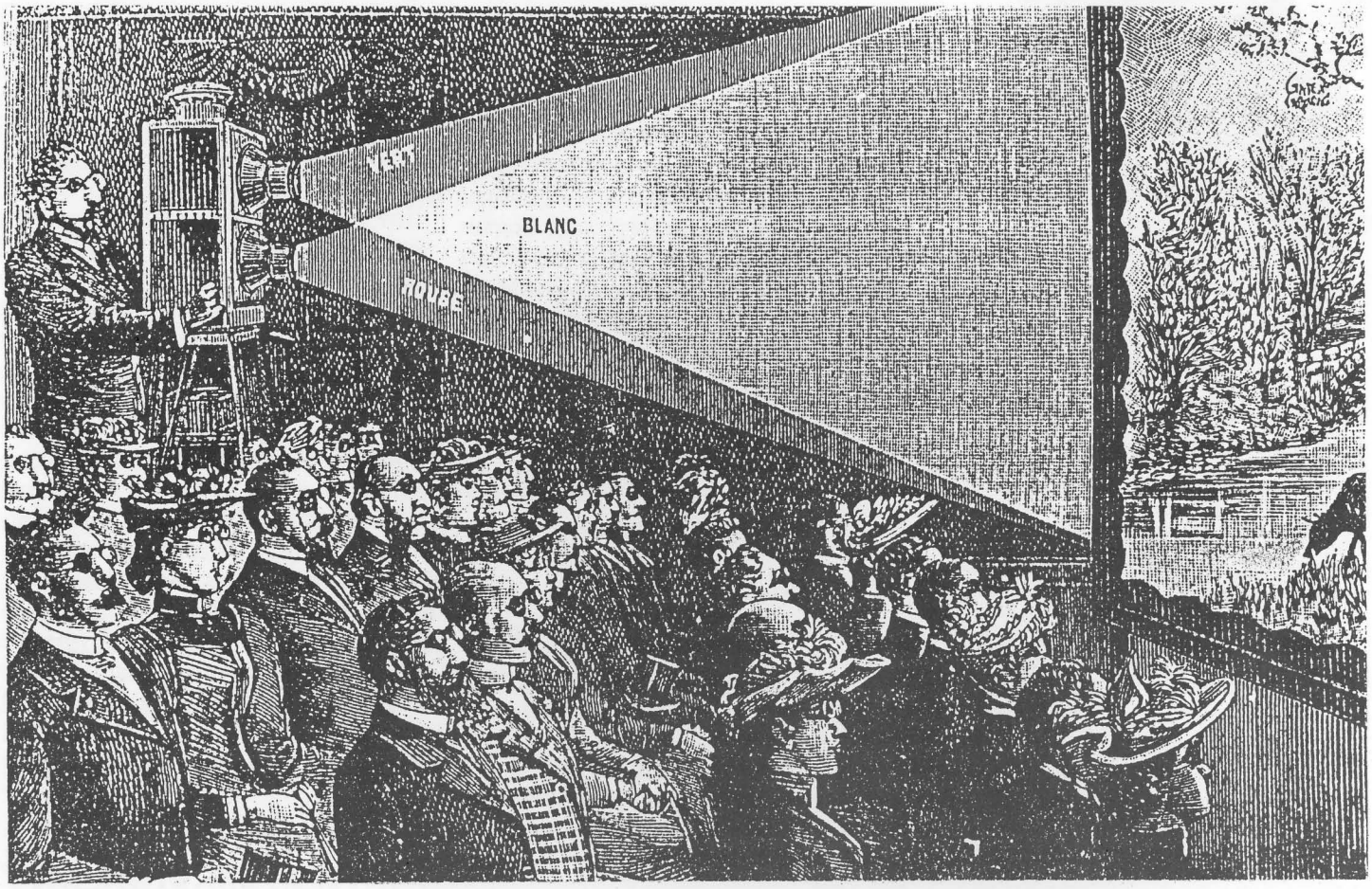

ILLUSTRATION FROM *MAGIE LUMINEUSE* OF AN 1880S RED-GREEN STEREO SHOW

Stereoscopic roots cont.

projection scene everyone,including the lanternist, is wearing Stereo Glasses, especially since the light beams from the lantern are labeled red and green, and the combination while. Thus it is obvious that, and the french text supports this, Anaglyphic Stereographic Projection is taking place. The large engraved illustration is that of the Molteni Biunial, made in France, and according to the test, this was all done about 1880.

So, "Yes Virginia", there was really Stereo Projection from a two lensed biunial magic lantern, at least in France in about 1880. Further references are rather limited. But the lantern in the Judson collection has limitless beauty and fascination for more than one reason.

Actual stereo projection with a biunial, using images from original glass stereo negatives, is presently undergoing experimentation and development, in an effort to demonstrate an "Old" technique with the Magic Lantern.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

There are a number of back issues of the Societies publications available. These may be obtained by sending $3.00 for each issue wanted to Robert Hall, 3321 114th N.W., Gig Harbor, WA 98335.

Issues available are:

The ML Bulletin
Vol. IV #4 Jan. 1983
Vol. V #2 June 1983
Vol. V #3 Dec. 1983

The Magic Lantern Bulletin
Vol. V #4 Mar.1984
Vol. VI #2 Dec.1984
Vol. VI #3 &4 April.1985
Vol. VII #1 July 1985
Vol. VII #2 No Publish Date
Vol. VII #3 Nov. 1985
Vol. VII #4 Mar. 1986
Vol. VII #1 June 1986
Vol. XVII #1 Oct. 1987
Vol. 18 #1 April 1988
Vol. 18 #3 Nov. 1988
Vol. 19 #1 May 1989

Magic Lantern Gazette
Vol. I #1 Fall 1989
Vol. I #2 Winter 1989
Vol. 2 #1 Spring 1990
Vol. 2 #2 (labeled Vol. 1#2) Fall 1990
Vol. 3#1 Spring 1991

CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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Cicero, Il 60650
Home Phone (708) 780-1160
Bus. Phone (708) 780-1160
President, VISCOM Video Production/Distribution

Interests: Lanterns; slides; literature; Kinetic devices; vintage cinema.

Does not give lantern shows, will buy and sell.

BECKER, HARVEY
3611 N.E. 85th St.
Vancouver, WA 98665
Home Phone (206) 574-3938
Teacher/Jeweler

Interests: Live model song slide, does give lantern shows.

OH OH, THAT PROFESSOR OPTIX MAGIC LANTERN SHOW.

"This is the lantern of Doctor Rakow,
He shows you things that you don't know.
He tells you of places you'll never go,
He had searched the world both high and low,
To find the miracles for this marvelous show,
From mountains where maddening winds did blow,
To islands where zephyrs breathed sweet and slow.

Oh, he had spared no pains or had spared no dough,
And he had dug at the secrets of long ago,
And he had risen the Heaven and plunged below,
For he wanted to make it one hell of a show,
And the things you will see in your brains will glow,
Long past the time when the winter snow,
Had frozen the summer fur below.

For this is the lantern of Doctor Rakow,
And youth may come and age may go,
But no more magic performers like this show!"

(Free adoption to "The circus of Doctor Lao" of
(by) Charles G. Finney in Janus Press 1984 by Claire Van Vliet.)

A special thank you to Willem and Nelly Tebra for this creative adapatation about one of our talented members.

OTHER MENTION OF MAGIC LANTERNS AND MEMBER CHARLES MUSSER

The New York Times Book Review

August 31,1991

Title: The Emergence of Cinema
The American Screen to 1907
By: Charles Musser

"Mr. Musser, who teaches film studies at Columbia University and New York University, traced the origins of the cinema back to the 'magic lantern' of the 17th century."

GILDING THE LILY

A Magazine report from Bob Bishop

A short article of interest to Magic Lantern Society members appears in the September, 1991 issue of the Smithonian Magazine. Entitled Guilding the Lily in the index, the heading of the article reads: *Glorious Reminders of a Golden Age of American Gardens.*

The article concerns itself with descriptions of famous American gardens during, for the most part, the early 1900's. Fantastic gardens were built by the rich and famous for various reasons. For visual beauty and probably more for social status. One of many such gardens in Ipswich, Massachusetts, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Crane, Jr. employed "a hundred gardeners and caretakers."

Magic Lantern Society members Interest? A series of beautiful lantern slide images. The glass slides, all but forgotten until Garden Club of America member Harriet J. Phelps rediscovered the trove in the garden clubs reference file.

All the colored lantern slides are most beautiful but I call on readers of this short magazine report to look most carefully at the middle image on page 58. The lantern slide is of the garden of Mrs. Lorne J. Knight of Lake Tahoe. An artificial waterfall is shown. It is named Eagle Falls. But look closely in the shadows at the right of the water falls. If ever there was a spirit of the waters, he or she is plainly shown in the shadows. At least it is clear to...

The Old Projectionist

RIDING YOUR HOBBY THROUGH THE RADIOPTICAN

Notes from the diary of a Radioptican Enthusiast (Date Unknown)

Almost everyone you meet has a pet hobby or fad and is more than willing to tell everyone else all about it. I must confess that I could never get interested in other people's fads, until I saw the RADIOPTICAN version of one. Opposite us lives a young man who has made an extensive study of botany. One night, after he had witnessed a Puzzlegram contest, he asked permission to give us a Botany evening, illustrated. Knowing nothing of how his steed might behave, if we gave him free rein to ride his

continued next page

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

People have always used illustrations, pictures etc. in their work, from Socrates to Sue Hall.

It was natural to use the Magic Lantern and slides when it became technically and economically feasible to do so. In 1886 the State of New York established a ***Visual Instruction*** division operated by the University of New York, under the direction of Albert S. Bickmore. Professor Bickmore came well qualified, a former teacher and curator of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

The law specified that New York City schools, State Normal schools and the cities citizens would have access to the material. By 1904, eighty cities of New York State would qualify to use this system.

In 1911 the collection of 35,000 slides and 30,000 negatives were destroyed by fire. The department quickly recovered and a pamphlet in 1934 surveys the record of loans from 1907 to 1934 by year, a total of 27 years.

The first year listed, the department loaned 30,000 slides.

Five years later, 1912 - 82,000 slides.

Ten years later, 1922 - 521,000 slides.

Twelve years later, 1934 - 1,190,000 slides.

1934 must have been a water mark year... with the advent of school size movie projectors, 35mm slides and film strips, the death knell was sounded.

Many rural schools continued the use of lantern slides, especially in Canada. By WW II it was all but over except for us collectors

Subbmitted by Joe Koch.

University of New York Report of October 1934

hobby in our midst, I reluctantly consented. What a surprise was in store for us! The young fellow had collected about fifty photographs of different trees and shrubs. On the back of each picture was pasted a leaf of the tree shown in the photograph. He told us all about the development, classification, growth and habits of our shade and forest trees, as though they were friends of his. Flowers also were shown, and their methods of attracting the bees, butterflies and moths necessary to their perpetuation, were explained.

We all learned a great deal beside having a thoroughly good time. By unanimous vote, we asked him to repeat, and he did, giving us moths next. He just stuck the mounted moths, butterflies and other insects into the RADIOPTICAN, and reproduced them on the screen in all their brilliant hues and beautiful markings.

Note—Coin and Stamp Collections can also be shown to great advantage through the RADIOPTICAN.

POST CARD SCOUTING

Notes from the diary of a Radioptican Enthusiast (Date Unknown)

One of the most interesting RADIOPTICAN games I ever took part in was called "Post Card Scouting." For this we used a good many local pictures; and equal number of nearby places with which the company would be fairly familiar; and another lot made up of famous and semi-famous places throughout the whole country.

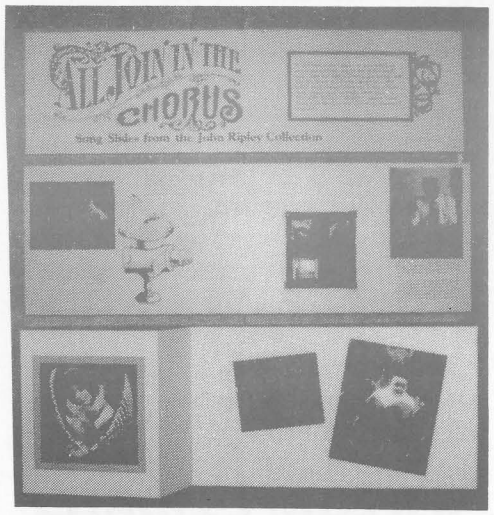
The cards were collected and then thoroughly mixed, so that there was no rhyme or reason in their sequence. Thus, a scene on the street next our own might appear just after a view of Niagara and just before Washington Monument. It was this geographical confusion that made the game interesting. Two of the party were selected to be scout captains, and they, in turn, chose sides as in a spelling match. The two scouting parties then seated themselves before the sheet, but on opposite sides of the room and as far apart as practicable. As the pictures were shown, the master of ceremonies commanded scout captain No. 1 to name the scene. He could consult with his entire party, but must announce his title for the picture before the manager could count ten (counting rather slowly). If one side failed, the chance was given to the opposing party. Then if the latter was successful, the captain could choose one from the opposite party. In fact, the principle is the same as in spelling down, the scout captain having the largest number in his party when the cards have all been shown, being the winner. As in a spelling match, good spellers are at a premium, so in this game, those who have traveled and are well informed on well-known places, are first chosen.

"All Join In The Chorus" or "Slide by Slide"

The Kansas State Historical Society opened a beautiful and extensive exhibit of the History of Illustrated Song Slides from the John Ripley Collection, and in his Honor.

Superbly written and performed, "Clever," songs were presented to an opening night crowd of over 300

Opening illustration at exhibit at Kansas Museum of History, Topika.



The Kansas State Historical Society presents the exhibit
ALL JOIN IN THE CHORUS
Song Slides from the John Ripley Collection

Handbill for exhibit.

Song slide enlargements display

people, July 12, at the Kansas Museum,Topeka, Kansas.

Jack Judson, representing the Magic Lantern Society, gave a demonstration of the equipment used over the years of the development of the Magic Lantern and its slides, as an historical perspective.

The following day, Nancy and Margaret Bergh presented a very excellent and very entertaining program using original song slides from their extensive collection. Jack also repeated his program from the previous evening. "The Rat Catcher" got'em every time.

Lantern Society members attending this "Fest" included those already mentioned, plus of course, the always charming and witty John Ripley,and Elgin and Dorothy Smith. Also honoring John was the well known musician, Max Morath from New Jersey, a long time friend of John's and the Berghs, who has long used some of the old Song Slides in his professional performances.

On the way Jack visited Lantern Society member Dr. Blanche Owens in Wichita, Kansas, and admired her lantern collection.

Elgin Smith, Nancy Bergh, Jack Judson, Dorothy, Margeret Bergh, Max Morath, John Ripley

LIKE A ONE-ARMED PAPER HANGER

In San Antonio, We discover the 19th-Century Projectionist-and See How Lucky We Are.

By Don Sutherland

If you want to know about a piece of hardware, ask the man who owns one. If you want to know about the good old slide projector - I mean really old - there's a man in San Antonio who owns 600. That's Jack Judson Jr., whose collection of magic lanterns reveals secrets that are worth knowing. Where is our industry headed? Predicting the future works better after reviewing the past - where has our industry been? On that topic alone, thanks to Jack Judson, the city of the Alamo holds much to remember.

All shows were live a century ago, but the role of the performer and equipment were evolving. The Phantasmagorias of the late 18th century used rear-projection to conceal the secrets of the screened visions, but after a few decades audiences thought they were on to the trick. Some lanternists confronted the problem head-on, with lanterns themselves a center of attention - known as Stereopticons, they were massive, regal Victorian mahogany and brass. Jack Judson's favorite, an oxy-hydrogen biunial, bears a gleaming plate with its name, the Rajah.

Biunial literally means two-in-one, and that's what the Rajah is - two complete optical systems, two slide gates and two lamps (called burners)whose respective housings are within the single varnished cabinet. There were also triunials, three-in-one machines. Either way, an exhibitor had the technical capacity for a dissolve show.

Aside from its especially elaborate decor, the Rajah is typical of wood biunials made in England and used around the world throughout the second half of the 19th century.

The Rajah and its counterparts required more than a projectionist. A wrestler would be helpful and a juggler, too, to keep up with all the things a biunial could do. But most exhibitors worked alone, facing a truth of the trade: what you were and what you did was what everyone had come for - you and your live show.

Jack Judson fingers a sculpture of rods, all brightly nickled, convergin on a tube curved back toward a circular platform. He stands a chalk-white cylinder of lime on the platform. "When ignited by an intense flame, such as produced from an oxygen and hydrogen mixture, lime burns blindingly bright and pure white. And very hot." He reaches around from behind the Rajah with both arms to adjust his slides for a dissolve, hugging the cabinet with a warmth transcending affection.

A dissolve was enacted from a valve at the rear, gradually redirecting the gases from one burner to another in the Rajah's two chambers. "A stop prevented you from turning off the lamp completely," says Jack,"because you had to keep it on pilot. Otherwise, you'd have to find some way to relight the lamp during the show. Did everyone in the 1880's carry matches?"

Well, surely a pro would, for backup. But he'd prefer not using them,when attention should be elsewhere.

If the moment called for an on-screen snowfall, for example, a snow effect was placed into one of the projection gates. This was a frame with rollers at both ends and a perforated fabric to hand-crank between them. The light piercing the perforations created snow falling to the bottom of the screen, if, of course, the operator remembered to crank toward the top of the screen.

There were also the hand-cranked chromatropes, the ship at sea rocking at the end of its lever, and the man whose nose grows with each tug of a slipper glass. While the exhibitor was tending all his chores, he was also recounting his patter - even leading a song - with inspirational spirit and verve.

But by the time of oxy-hydrogen biunials and triunials and their"dissolving views" shows, the magic lantern had been in extensive use for some 200 years. And in those centuries, the lanternist became as much of a common sight, an icon in popular art, as any other common citizen. Yet while all the others were shown in various states of mind,we seem to find the lanternist in only two - very sullen and withdrawn,or crazed and manic. I wondered if Jack Judson had any theories about this.

"Well," he said, "most of them in the early days were itinerants. And I think they probably had some great mood swings brought on by their

economics, and the weather. Because generally they had to walk from town to town in Europe and having walked through the Alps, your demeanor could be either very crazed or somber."

Characteristically the lanternist set his equipment in a kind of back pack, a wooden framework with the lantern on top. Single lanterns were customary prior to the 1840s, of sheet metal construction. This made the lantern itself lightweight, but the lantern was not the slide show. The slides were.

"I would guess he used somewhere between 100 to 200 slides for an hour's show," Jack relates. "Each was constructed of two or three pieces of glass, rarely less than three inches in diameter, all of them mounted in wood frames for protection. That came to quite a bit of weight. When he finally arrived wherever his show was to be, he had to sort through his slides and hope that none broke in his travels. He had to make sure they were all right side-up. Plus he had to do his own PR, arrange fora hall or a venue to show his show, and find a screen of some kind. He had to remember to bring his script, or readings, and his reading light. And he required some means of starting the fire to light the show. He probably borrowed some - got a stick with some fire on it, out of someone's fireplace.

"So all in all, he had quite a project just to set-up. And then hopefully someone came to see the show and leave a few pennies - because the charges for these were always extremely low. So these fellas probably didn't live very well. Are those good reasons to look crazed or sullen?"

If they aren't good reasons, life with an open flames would be. "You're working in the dark, and spilling a pint of kerosene can make quite a conflagration in a quick hurry. And they had no fire control methods -no extinguishers."

Progress through technology was slower in those days than these, with the result that for two centuries projection improved only incrementally. "The quality of the lenses from the very early magic lanterns to the 19th century stereopticons improved enormously - from simple miniscus lenses to plano-convex compound lenses, from single condensers to double - and undoubtedly with better grindings as well."

Enormous improvements were made in illuminants, too, but Jack Judson believes this did nothing to make the lanternist's life easier. "I have the feeling it got worse. The simple machines were the easiest to use."

As improving quality persuaded audiences that the sights at lantern shows would be worth seeing, a demand followed for more to see - new effects and bedazzlement. Exhibitors found themselves needing increasing skills and talents. On the professional's level, better technology was more complex, and fired a demand for better showmen, and better roadies.

As always, the lanternist brought his own illuminant along - there were no electrical outlets to plug into, and lanterns adapted to household gas were nowhere near the requisite brightness of oxy-hydrogen.

Oxygen and hydrogen were carried under pressure in heavy metal cylinders, or in unpressurized gas bags - lighter, but leakier. And if a tour were a long one, far from supply routes on the frontier, not every burg and hamlet had an oxy-hydrogen filling station.

"They had to make their own gas," Jack says. "Depending on the gases you were after - and acetylene was among several that was used on the road - you can mix acids with calcium compounds, or even water, or you can heat things - you get flammable gases. The same companies that sold the lanterns also sold gas generators just for that purpose. That was,of course, more luggage for the lanternist."

Arriving at the site of the performance, the lanternist with his intensely hot illuminants had to protect his equipment from abrupt thermal dynamics - cracking. "If he comes in from a cold winter day,he's going to take the lenses off the machine and tuck them into his coat pockets or under his arms, or place them nearby to a stove or fire place." Without sufficient ventilation, moisture could build up -condensers, even the slides themselves would begin steaming.

Once the oxy-hydrogen burner - the graceful nickled sculpture in Jack's hand - was blazing at full operational intensity, the exhibitor engaged in a continual process of adjustment. "As it burns, you've got to rotate the lime - turning and elevating it simultaneously - to keep it burning consistently. And turning your

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chromatropes and changing the slides and working the dissolves and telling funny stories - you were a very busy fella."

The advent of electric lighting solved some logistics of getting to work, but few of the complexities of the performance itself. The incandescent bulb was too weak to beam an image with a three-inch aperture across a 50 or 100 foot throw, to make a dazzling image 15 feet wide or wider. Only the arc lamp had that power - two rods of carbon reducing inexorably to powder and ash, as an electric spark gouged its way between them. It gave the sheer brute dazzle that finally surpassed limelight, but with no less demand for the exhibitor's attention.

"Automatic feeds came later, but in the day of the biunial stereopticon you had the task of keeping two carbon arcs adjusted perfectly, with manual adjustments. I don't know how often they had to fix the gap between the carbons as the electricity ate away at their tips, but I imagine it must have been very few seconds, because the arc was very critical."

Why not get an assistant? Many traveling lantern shows were, in fact,troupes of a sort, where extra hands and backs relieved some of the exhibitor's burdens. But for many of the Victorian-era lanternists, the entrepreneurs in the footsteps of their crazed and solemn forebears, it was a matter of economics. Show people weren't known to make a whole heck of a lot of money at that time.

"Some lecturers might have made enough to hire and train somebody to operate the lantern, freeing the lecturer to concentrate on lecturing. But for the projectionist he hired, the only thing that was eliminated was the need to tell the story. He still had to be a one-armed paperhanger back there, working the lantern on cue from the guy up front.

There are no recordings of those performances, and we can only guess how a really brilliant exhibitor's show might have gone. We can find the slides and, in some cases, even the readings used for narration. Still,there is so much that can be only surmised, about the embellishments an exhibitor invoked if he had the gift - if he correctly recognized his historical role as storyteller with his listeners still gathered around the fire.But such things can be surmised with some sense of accuracy, since the old lantern has been rediscovered in America and Europe. On both sides of the Atlantic in 1978, Magic Lantern Societies were established for people who like the lanterns, who like the slides, who like performing. Not all of them have 600-lantern collections as Jack Judson does, but a few come close. In 1989, Jack was elected president of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada.

Jack has given plenty of lantern performances as a consultant to numerous museums, including San Antonio's own Witte, and has his own observations of his audiences.

"They respond to these things not as quaint artifacts of some bygone age, but as audiences of today seeing something they find spectacular. I mean people of all ages - children to octogenarians."

It makes sense that they would. Television or Nintendo may be technically more advanced, but they are also the commonplace. Like an evening of live theater, a magic lantern performance adopts its connotation of ceremony and occasion. But the theater's historical role is well-known. The magic lantern? "In the 1990s," Jack Judson concludes, "people are so unaware that there even exists this history that they might be just as impressionable as those who saw their first lantern shows in the 1600s.

A Lanternist's Lot:
Will it Ever Change?
Through The Villages
By F.J. Scrimgeour

"Many and varied are the classifications into which the lantern fraternity may be divided; few of us are alike in skill and experience - all of us differ somewhat in the nature of our duties. From the London professional with his triple and latest make of cinematograph to the village amateur with his three-wick "Russian iron," we find all grades of lanternists in our brotherhood. Yet there are two great divisions into one of which every lantern operator may be placed - traveling lanternists and stationary lanternists.

A stationary operator has many advantages over his brother who tours about the country. His work is done always in the same hall, and so actual

continued next page

labour is greatly minimized; the positions of screen and lantern require no thought - they have had their proper location often before,gas arrangements are familiar, brackets are well-known friends.

"How different is the lot of the man who travels - who changes his hall every night - who never knows under what architectural disadvantages his next exhibition may be given. And yet there is much to compensate for such troubles. Monotony is well nigh an impossibility, variety a dead certainty!

"The placing of the lantern (for exhibitions in churches) was often attended with much difficulty. Sometimes the legs of the vestry table were at just the proper distance apart to allow of its standing on the seats of two adjacent pews; when that was so the lantern was sufficiently high...But more often a board had to be fished out of some dusty pantry or dismal coal cellar, and made to bridge across the space between two pews. The arrangement of the gas brackets in some churches was most tantalizing; on several occasions we found that the architect had placed three or four gas uprights down the very center of the church. He was assuredly not a lanternist!

"In some villages the people have a curious habit of waiting outside the door in groups until one or two minutes past the hour, and then coming in with a rush and stampede. At one moment the hall shows nothing but empty benches, and the uninitiated (exhibitor) imagines a perfect failure; at the next every seat is occupied, and standing room is getting scarce!"

Excerpts from The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger, November ,1899.

ILLUSTRATED SONGS

Notes from the diary of a Radioptican Enthusiast (Date Unknown)

When we were planning our ninth or tenth RADIOPTICAN evening, my wife remarked that she wished we could add RADIOPTICAN music to our program, as she thought this would form a pleasant feature. RADIOPTICAN music did not sound very practical at first thought, but after a little reflection, we both concluded there were brilliant possibilities in the idea, the part the RADIOPTICAN would play naturally being to illustrate the songs. As my wife said: "You illustrate the test of books, - why not the text of songs."

With this thought germ as a starting point, she set about securing the materials to picture what the words of the songs described. Naturally she turned to her old time favorites, choosing the songs we know so well that she could play and sing them in the darkened room while I manipulated the RADIOPTICAN. That evening, between other features of the entertainment, we heard The Old Oaken Bucket, for which she had found really beautiful illustrations, - first, the well curb with its picturesque surroundings; then "the wide-spreading pond and mill that stood by it:" "the bridge and the rock, where the cataract fell:" and so on. Each time the chorus recurred to the old oaken bucket, I slipped in the first picture again, which was quite lovely enough to stand being looked at several times.

Another old-time favorite that my wife illustrated was The Battle Cry of Freedom, and I assure you those patriotic strains and the accompanying pictures stirred our pulses, and we had a ringing chorus from everybody. In this one also, the pictures were extremely attractive: "We will rally from the hillside" was represented by a charming country scene; "we will rally from the plain" showed the countryside in the plains of the West; while for "shouting the battle-cry of freedom," she had found a glorious picture of a regiment surrounding the old flag, and waving their hats for a mighty cheer.

Annie Laurie, Ben Bold, My Old Kentucky Home and such songs were the ones that mother likes to sing and have illustrated but the younger members of the family were not to be outdone, and they soon adopted the idea and fitted it to the popular songs of the day, often using snapshot photographs of their friends to picture such masterpieces as Baby Rose, When I'm Alone I'm Lonesome, After the Honeymoon and a dozen others that all the young people are whistling and singing. Pearls of laughter greeted the various illustrations, some of which had been specially prepared through the combination of different photographs, and these resulted in some great surprises for the parties themselves and much amusement for all present.

While all the poses were not specially appropriate, the combination of the pictures with the songs made a great hit. The boys also flashed on the screen, as a surprise, one or two snapshots made of a couple present who were not

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Illustrated songs cont.

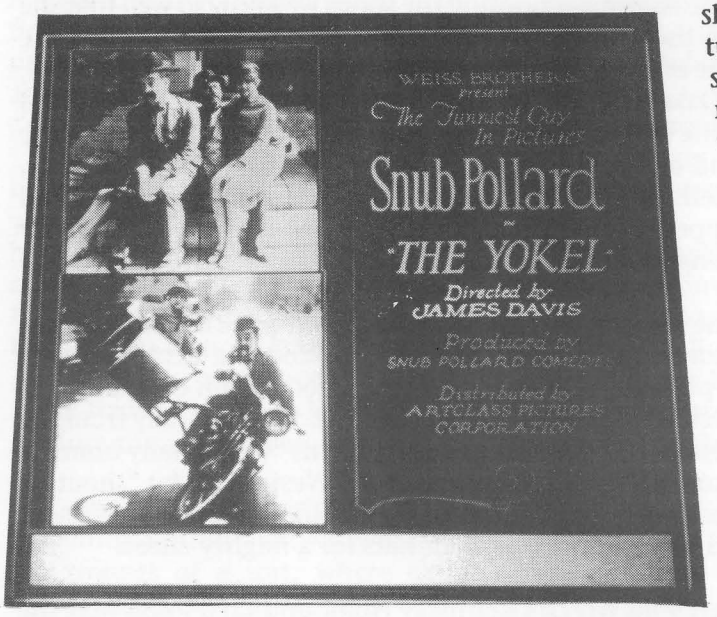
aware of the proximity of the photographers when the snapshots were taken.

Note. - A delightful variation of the above entertainment can be made by showing colored pictures of the flags of the different countries, while the national anthems are being sung. Beside the flags of each country, pictures that show the costumes and the home-life characteristic of each, may be shown, the national flag being "unfurled" at the beginning and again at the end.

Coming Attraction Slides

Anyone who has been to the movies has seen the Coming Attractions play across the screen, apprising the audience of films that are coming soon to a thither near them. And, each of us is enthralled, amused, disgusted, or captivated by the latest advertisements for screen comedy, action, or love story as well as horror film. But, how many of us know the predecessors of these two minute snippets of film trailers – the Coming Attraction slides.

These glass slides, as a whole, have been around in various form since the invention of the Magic Lantern in 1644 by Athanasius Kircher. Evolving from painted to photographic scenes which were used to tell stories in a multitude of ways, the coming attractions were developed from vaudeville and used to tell patrons of the next act or the words of a song for a sing-a-long during the intermissions. When silent movies came about, the slides were used by the theater management to inform of the newly coming films over the next week, since during the early cinema, film programs were changed almost every other day.



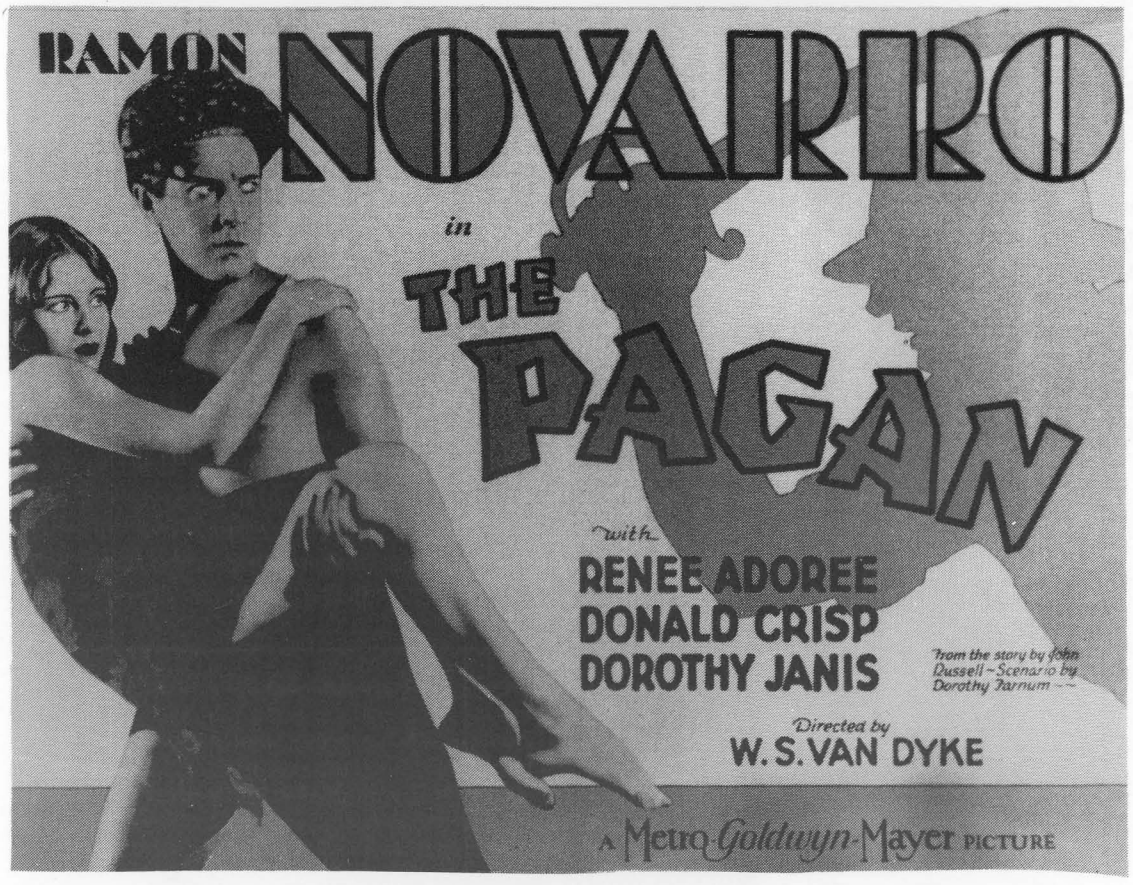
As the films lengthened and gained better storylines, the slides themselves grew more sophisticated in order to capture the audiences' attention. By the 1920's some of these slides were as fancy as the films they advertised. Having matured to an advertising art form, they reached their peak in the mid-twenties. By the end of the decade, with the advances of sound, the slides were reduced to relics; although, the slides did not disappear completely, as they continued to be used at times, and were even manufactured up to the late fifties and early sixties in some instances.

And, today, slides are making a resurgence into the theaters, flashed on the screen as the audience takes their seats. They again remind us of upcoming films, movie trivia, and even remind us to make that trip to the snackbar. Yet, the slides from the silent motion picture are too often forgotten, like so many of the films from our early film heritage. While many silent societies have begun to appear, hopefully, so will the history of many of these slides from that bygone era of cinema history. At least that is the hope of this author as he puts the finishing touches on his forthcoming history of the cinema entitled, *"Coming Attractions"*.

This book will showcase a variety of fifty-eight silent and early sound films, the cast and crews through synopsis of the film, notes, credits, and biographical sketches. Showcasing the years 1913 to 1929, the book has many surprises as well as information for the fan and historian alike. And, best of all, each film discussed is illustrated with a Coming Attraction slide.

For more information you can contact Kevin John Charbeneau at P.O. Box 8423, Universal City, CA 91608-8423.

Douglas Fairbanks Jr.
STEPHEN STEPS OUT
with
THEODORE ROBERTS
SUPPORTED by
NOAH BEERY, HARRY MYERS
and FRANK CURRIER
From the story "THE GRAND CROSS OF THE CRESCENT" by RICHARD HARDING DAVIS
Written for the screen by EDFRID BINGHAM
Directed by JOSEPH HENABERY
A Paramount Picture


RAMON NOVARRO
in
THE PAGAN
with
RENEE ADOREE
DONALD CRISP
DOROTHY JANIS
From the story by John Russell ~ Scenario by Dorothy Farnum
Directed by
W. S. VAN DYKE
A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer PICTURE

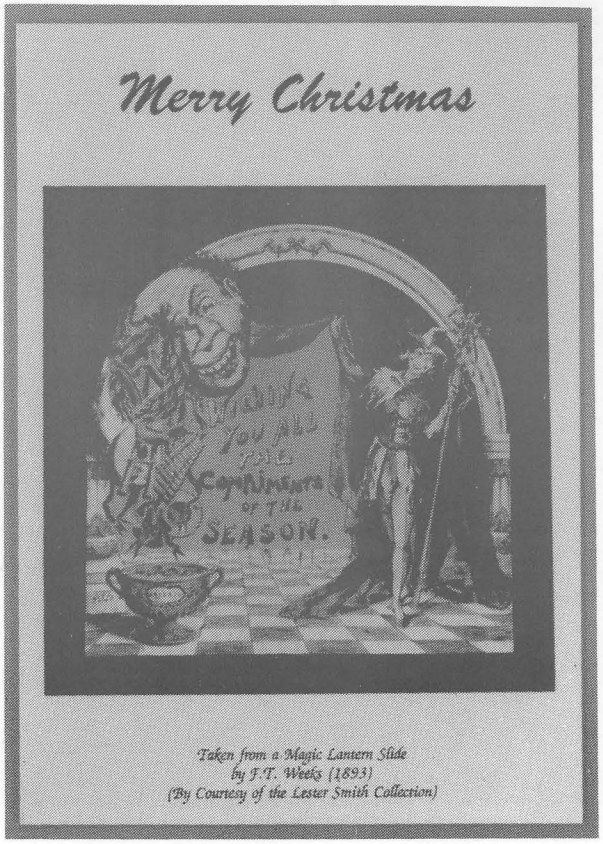
FOR SALE

This is a portion of a large number of lantern slides collected over the years by Bill Marder. The collection includes 18 lantern boxes of both wood and cardboard, holding over 60 slides in each box. In addition there are other boxes holding another 600 views. All are excellent condition. The views cover Ireland, Life of George Washington, North Africa, Palestine, Syria, Sculpture, Religious views, France, China, Philippines, Mesopotamia, Jordan, Turkey, Greece, Volcanoes, Italy, United States, animals, etc. They all total at least 1,600 commercially made views, all beautifully mounted, some hand colored. Every slide is marked with a, label by the manufacturer description. Also included is a nice small electrical B&L projector, carrier and extra bulb with case. Willing to sell the complete set for $1,500, plus shipping. If interested contact Bill at: Bill Marder, P.O. Box 222, Ware, MA 01032, Phone (413) 967-6505

FOR SALE

Available a limited amount of Christmas cards with a magic lantern slide image. Cards include envelopes and are one dollar each, plus postage and packaging. All purchases to be in U.S.dollars please. John Finney

61 Desford Road,
Newbold Verdon,
Leicestershire LE9 9LG
ENGLAND



Taken from a Magic Lantern Slide by J.T. Weeks (1893) (By Courtesy of the Lester Smith Collection)